Theology not 103.

REMARKS

Upon a late

PAMPHLET

CALL'D A

PLEA

FOR

Human Reason.

Lactantius de vera sapientia, Lib. 4. §. 24.

Nec enim mens terrenis viſceribus incluſa & tabe Corporis impedita, aut comprehendere per ſe poteſt, aut capere veritatem, niſi aliunde doceatur.

Cic. de Nat. Deor. Lib. 3.

Satius fuit nullam omnino nobis a Diis immortalibus datam eſſe rationem, quàm tanta cum pernicie datam.

By the Reverend

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Vicar of *Prittlewell* in *Eſſex*.

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REMARKS

Upon a late

PAMPHLET

CALL'D

A Plea for HUMAN REASON.

IT is but a little while ſince this Pamphlet call'd a *Plea for Human Reaſon* came to my Hands. The promiſing Title made me ſomewhat eager to peruſe it, as expecting a Diſcovery of ſome new Inſults that might have been made upon the rational World, and ſo on Courſe to be entertained with Arguments unknown to former Ages, that

the preſent Occaſion might more eſpecially require in its Defence: But I found myſelf altogether diſappointed, there being nothing of that Nature to be met with: I only obſerv'd, as indeed it is obvious to any Reader, that the whole was wrote with the true Spirit of *Deiſm*; bold in Aſſertion, but deficient in Proof; audacious in Enquiry, but after ſuch Things that no mortal Man can ever come to the Knowledge of; clamorous for Truth and Reaſon, but through a wrong Purſuit loſt as to both, and involv'd in Ignorance and Error.

What mov'd the Author to publiſh theſe Papers, he declares in his Concluſion to be his great Concern for the Dignity and Honour of Human Reaſon: As if Man had any Indignity offer'd him, ſhould his Maker undertake to teach him more perfectly, or by a larger Communication ſhould vouchſafe to inſtruct him, at what Time, or in what Sort ſoever he might pleaſe to impart it: And I queſtion not but our Author would be very thankful for

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ſuch an ineſtimable Benefit, were he not blind as to his own Imperfections, and therefore too proud to own the Want of it.

Hence it is, that he thinks Reaſon to be highly reflected upon, and its arrogant Uſurpation immediately ſtruck at by the Right Reverend the Lord Biſhop of *London*, becauſe his Lordſhip has declar'd, *Reaſon of itſelf to be an inſufficient Guide in Matters of Religion:* This, as our Author ſays, is his Lordſhip's Doctrine, the ſecond Head of his ſecond Paſtoral Letter; and as this Aſſertion is moſt undoubtedly true of itſelf, ſo is it in that excellent Treatiſe very ſtrenuouſly and judiciouſly maintain'd, the whole being a Work altogether worthy his Lordſhip's great Character, and well becoming his Charge: But however true this Aſſertion may be of itſelf, or however ſerviceable to the Cauſe of Chriſtianity, could its Adverſaries at any Time be brought to allow the Truth of it; yet our Author draws from it the moſt dangerous Conſequences imaginable. Plea, p. 4.

ginable. That it is a Doctrine plainly derogatory to Human Reaſon; deſtructive of the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God; repugnant to natural Religion, and the Holy Scriptures alſo: A bold Charge, and ſuch that I dare ſay no Chriſtian Prelate, but more eſpecially the Biſhop of *London*, ſo great an Ornament to his Church and Nation, but with the utmoſt Indignation and Abhorrence would reject and deteſt. But I think it may very eaſily be made appear, that no ſuch pernicious Conſequence can in any wiſe be deduc'd from his Lordſhip's Aſſertion; and tho' our Author has ſaid it, yet he ſeems to confeſs his Inability to maintain it, by dropping it at once, and declining the Proof of it.

For to ſpeak to it briefly: Is God's Power or Wiſdom to be impeach'd, if he maintains his Prerogative of diſpenſing his Favours, and communicating the Emanations of his Knowledge, at what Time, or in what Manner himſelf ſhall judge moſt expedient? Or is it derogatory to Human Reaſon, that

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it was not at first compleat and perfect, but kept and reserv'd in an imperfect State to be improv'd, advanc'd, or enlighten'd, according to the good Pleasure of its Donor? That the just Sense of our Imperfections might beget in us a Dependance upon God; That the Pride of Man might be abated from the Conviction of his own Insufficiency, and that we might always be resign'd and prepar'd with Readiness to submit to the Creator's Directions: It being certain that a Man who thinks his own Reason sufficient, should God speak to him from Heaven, would turn his Back upon the Words of Omniscience, and despise his Instructions.

And then I am very certain, that it cannot at all be repugnant to Natural Religion: For I dare affirm one Principle of Natural Religion is, that we be at all Times ready to receive and obey the Revelation of the Will of God; and not to say we had no need of it, as being wise and safe enough without it. For this were to charge the Wisdom of God with a superfluous and unne-

unneceſſary Act in giving us a Revelation, when there was no Occaſion for it: That the Goſpel of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the Promiſes of Salvation and everlaſting Life through his Name, is a Revelation, cannot be deny'd, and the Truth of it is ſo well ſupported by the greateſt Evidence that Fact is capable of, that neither the Devil himſelf, nor any of his Adherents have as yet been able to overthrow it.

Now for God to beſtow this Revelation, when the Reaſon of Man was ſufficient without it, is a very vain, a very abſurd, and even a very uſeleſs, and therefore an irational Act in him, and by amazing Wonders of Omnipotence in all Ages to atteſt the Truth of it, and by the Power and Aſſiſtance of his bleſſed Spirit to enable ſo many Thouſands in every Age without the leaſt Concern to abandon their Lives and Fortunes, and ſo freely to ſhed their Blood in its daily Confirmation, muſt very grievouſly and ſeverely reflect upon the Juſtice, the Wiſdom and the Goodneſs of God in ſuffering all this

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for no End, if bare unaſſiſted Reaſon were ſufficient without it: So that what you charge upon his Lordſhip's Doctrine and Aſſertion falls immediately upon your Head, and makes way for the more ready embracing as undoubtedly true, what his Lordſhip declares to be the very evil and miſchievous Deſign of all ſuch Reaſoning, that it tends to leſſen the Eſteem of the Goſpel of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and to beget a Contempt of it in the Minds of Men, that the Cauſe of Infidelity may be propagated with leſs Difficulty, and the Hearts of Men prepar'd for its Reception: This or nothing muſt be the Deſign in Theory; and with what Succeſs it is carried on, I appeal to Experience: And altho' you may now and then talk ſomewhat favourably of Chriſtianity, as if it were the better Scheme of the two, as if it deliver'd Things ſomewhat more perfectly and compleatly, *&c.* in order it may be to cloak or extenuate your Impiety, yet this is eaſily ſeen through, *the Voice may be Jacob's Voice, but we are ſure the Hands are the Hands of Eſau*; yet let their

Plea, p. 17, *&c.*

Pretences be what they will, ſuch Writers are the moſt dangerous Enemies to the Croſs of *Chriſt*, and therefore we ought evermore to *pray againſt their Wickedneſs, that their precious Balms may not break our Heads*, and to eſteem all ſuch no other, than downright Infidels in a Chriſtian Profeſſion.

However, you care not totally to deſert this Argument, and rather than your Cauſe ſhould ſuffer, Reaſon muſt be ſufficient, or otherwiſe Man ſhall be innocent, and God himſelf directly charg'd with all the Abominations of thoſe unhappy Times: And therefore you boldly cenſure the Divine Diſpenſations, and moſt audaciouſly impeach the Goodneſs and Wiſdom of God, as *pag.* 8, 14, 44 & 45, in leaving Men, as you there alledge, for ſo many Ages under an unavoidable Neceſſity of Infidelity and Sin: This is indeed the ſhorteſt Way of dealing with an Almighty Power, and the readieſt Way of accounting for what by Human Reaſon we are utterly uncapable of accounting for; without having any Regard to the Conduct of Divine Providence

dence in Reference to all external Effects, which, as it exceeds our Capacity and is altogether unknown and unſearchable by us, ſo the Senſe of its being ſo greatly above us ought to teach us not to enquire ſo curiouſly into the Secrets of it, nor raſhly to judge or determine any thing concerning it: But what by the Thread of your Diſcourſe you attribute to the Abuſe of Reaſon, which you ſay was at all Times ſufficient, would Men have attended to it, I impute to the actual Inſufficiency of it; for I cannot perſuade myſelf that for ſo many Ages together the Abuſe ſhould be ſo very Univerſal, that no one Perſon ſhould be found of Knowledge and Ability ſufficient to refute theſe Errors, and teach Mankind their Duty, and yet it is plain there was none. At the ſame Time, to charge upon God, as you do, all the Superſtition, Immorality, and Enormity, of the Ages before Chriſtianity, is too horrible for me to come into; or if you aſk the Reaſon why Chriſtianity was not reveal'd much earlier, I am utterly

Plea, p. 10.

uncapable of making any other Reply than what the Scripture does for me; *That God has the Times and Seaſons in his own Power*; and, that *the Times of this Ignorance God wink'd at, but now commands all Men every where to repent:* Or however impiouſly others may reflect upon the Methods of God's Providence, becauſe obſcure and myſterious to us, yet I am verily perſuaded, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſays, *Pſal.* xxxvi. 6. *That his Righteouſneſs for ever ſtands like the ſtrong Mountains, though his Ways may be unſearchable, and his Judgments paſt finding out.*

From hence you paſs to the State of Innocence, as if ſomething might ariſe from thence in further Defence of your Plea, had not his Lordſhip, as you ſay, by Way of Prevention foreclos'd your Deſign, by affirming it *a fallacious Way to argue from the firſt uncorrupted State of Human Nature, to the preſent corrupt State of it:* And doubtleſs it is ſo; for it is highly probable to believe, there is as much Difference betwixt the rational Faculties of the Soul be-

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fore and after the Fall, as there is betwixt the ſenſitive Powers, when a Man is in perfect Health, and what they are when in a ſick and diſtemper'd Condition: In the firſt they are ſtrong, quick and vigorous; in the latter languid, confus'd and impair'd, unable to inform the Underſtanding aright, or truly and perfectly to convey any Object to it.

But were it otherwiſe, and you had the Liberty to make what Uſe you thought fit of this Argument, yet I cannot conceive how the Fall of *Adam* can be brought into the preſent Caſe; for it was not owing to the abſolute Inſufficiency of his natural Powers or Faculties to preſerve him; or to his own actual Abuſe of them that he fell; but to a voluntary Tranſgreſſion of a Divine Command, a wilful Violation of a reveal'd Law. He was not bid to look within himſelf and conſult his own Reaſon, whether the Act he was about to commit was agreeable to it or no; but to remember that it was forbidden by God, and that under no leſs a San-

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ction of Penalty than immediate Death. So that this firſt Offence ſeems to be of the ſame Nature with every wilful Sin now committed againſt the Light and Precepts of the Goſpel: And when Men make themſelves thus wilfully criminal, neither the Sufficiency nor Inſufficiency of Reaſon can aggravate or extenuate their Guilt. But as his Lordſhip ſays, this moſt manifeſtly is a fallacious and uncertain Way of arguing; for although it cannot be deny'd but that ſufficient Reaſon was given to our firſt Parents to be their Guide, and to anſwer all the Ends of that State of Life they were plac'd in; yet I cannot at all be perſuaded, that it was ever intended to be their Guide in the Worſhip of God, or the more immediate Duties of Religion: For as it is highly reaſonable to think they wanted not the Society of Angels before their Fall, ſo neither did they want their Guidance or Direction in the Worſhip of God.

That it is impoſſible any Thing can he drawn from hence, but what is full of

of Fallacy and Uncertainty, is further evident, if we conſider the unſpeakable Injury human Nature ſuffered in the Fall of Man. For ſhould it be allow'd that in *Paradiſe* Reaſon was ſufficient in Matters of Religion; yet after the Fall, our Underſtandings were ſo greatly obſcur'd, the original Brightneſs of our Souls ſo totally darkned, and the Light of Nature ſo nigh extinguiſh'd, that, as *Euſebius* ſays[a], there was a total Depravation of all natural Knowledge of a divine Being; and that we were loſt, as to any true Notion of a God ariſing from the Powers of Reaſon. So that there is as much Difference betwixt theſe two States or Conditions of Being, as there is betwixt Light and Darkneſs, and therefore no Analogy of Argument, no Parity of Reaſon can hold from one to the other.

The Next that gives Offence, is what his Lordſhip has declar'd; *That Reaſon, in Matters of Religion, is left to Speculation and Conjecture.* And this is as un- Paſt. Let. Page 8.

[a] Euſebius Eccl. Hiſt Lib. x. c. iv p. 285. de homine lapſo. Τῶν περὶ Θεοῦ φυσικῶν ἐννοιῶν πάμπαν ἀπεστερημένος.

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doubtedly true, as any one Aſſertion there made; and I think there is not any that ought to be queſtion'd: Yet altho' I ſhould allow you (which I will in no wiſe do) that Reaſon might give us a pretty juſt and full Comprehenſion of moral Duties, might ſet before our Eyes with ſome Exactneſs the Nature of Good and Evil, and legibly point out the Difference betwixt them; yet it does not from thence follow, that it muſt be able alſo to inform us truly of the Nature of God, or ſufficient to guide us ſo perfectly in his Worſhip, as for us to be aſſur'd that the Adoration we pay him, may be acceptable or agreeable to his Will, ſince a good moral Man may defeat the End of his Worſhip, by his Manner of paying it, for want of that Direction which ariſes from reveal'd Religion; as is evident from the monſtrous Corruptions in the Ages before Chriſtianity. But in order to reconcile you to this Opinion, I do aſſure you it was long ago publiſh'd to the World by thoſe, who on all Hands were allow'd to be as complete Maſters of Reaſon

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and Philoſophy, as any of their Time; and one of them, I am ſure, as little a Friend to Revelation, eſpecially to the Chriſtian Cauſe, as any of its modern Enemies, be they never ſo virulent. I mean *Porphyry*[b], who in his Letter to *Anebo*, acknowledges all that he ſaid concerning God, to be Matter of Conjecture or mere Speculation. And if at a loſs in this firſt Notion, they may well be ſuppoſed to proceed in their further Advances with equal Uncertainty: You have his Words exactly, and in the very next Sentence that follows, he founds the Being of a God upon a bare Conceſſion. So very eaſy is it, if we truſt to our own Strength, to be loſt as to all Religion; and while we are reaſoning our ſelves out of Chriſtianity to fall into Atheiſm at once. And his Pupil *Jamblichus*, who took this Letter to Pieces, and wrote a very zealous and copious Anſwer to it; yet in

[b] Ἀρξόμαι τ πρός σε φιλίας ἀπὸ Θεῶν κ δαιμόνων ἀγαθῶν, ἥ τε τούτοις συγγενῶν φιλοσοφημάτων· ὡς ἐ ὢν ἔμπλαι μὴ πλεῖστα, κ ὡ δὴ τοῖς Ἕλλησιν φιλοσόφοις, ἔμπλαι ἢ ἐν σοχασμῷ τὸ πλέον τὰς ἀρχὰς ἔχοι τ πίστεως.

Πρῶτον ὖν δίδοσθαι εἶναι Θεὺς, &c. Porphyr. in Epiſt. ad. Aneb. Ægyptium, p. 1

his Chap. xxi. § 1. [c], declares the true Cauſe of all this Uncertainty, or rather Ignorance in Matters of this Nature, to be entirely owing to Man's abſolute Incapacity by his own Strength ever to arrive to any certain Knowledge of them. For Men being hindred and miſled by their Paſſions and Infirmities, their Sentiments of divine Things indeed were model'd by them and form'd accordingly. It ſeems therefore to me altogether reaſonable to believe, that if Man be unable of himſelf to form due Conceptions of the divine Nature, his Worſhip which he pays, muſt on courſe be lame and imperfect, and therefore unacceptable to God; becauſe not founded upon thoſe Conſiderations, nor directed by that Knowledge of his Attributes and Perfections, which is the Foundation of all religious Worſhip, and which are only reveal'd to us in Holy Scripture. To the want of this

[c] Σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ τοῦτο αἴτιον γέγονε τὸ ἐπὶ τὰ πλήθη τῶν ἐπινοιῶν παραλογῆς· ἀδύναλοι γὰρ ὄντες αὐτῶν οἱ ἄνθρωποι λογισμῶν τὴν γνῶσιν ἐπιλαβεῖν, νομίζοντες ὃ δυνατὸν, φέρονται ὅλον πρὸς τὰ οἰκεῖα ἑαυτῶν τὰ ἀνθρώπινα πάθη, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν παρ' ἑαυτοῖς τὰ θεῖα τεκμαίρονται. Jamblichus de Myſteriis, Sect. i. c. xxi.

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it is to be aſcribed that Mankind, for ſo many Ages, was ſo greatly miſtaken in this Part of their Duty; either in the Object of their Worſhip, as robbing God of the Honour due to him alone, by deifying Creatures; or elſe in the Manner of paying it, as being always mixt and blended with Idolatry, Superſtition or Profaneneſs; from which in the ancient World, Reaſon was found (even by them that made the beſt Uſe of it) utterly inſufficient and unable to recover us, 'till by the Benefit of reveal'd Religion our Underſtandings were enlighten'd, our Reaſon rectified, and the Worſhip of God ſecured from the Danger of Error and Impiety.

For your further Confirmation, and that I may the more fully convince you of the Truth of this, I will preſent you with the Opinion of *Tully*, who, I think, had ſtudied all the Philoſophers, thoſe celebrated Maſters of Reaſon, and digeſted them as perfectly as any of his own Time, or of the Days before him. But then, as he was a Man of great Capacity and a mighty Spirit, being *Nul-*

ius addictus jurare in verba Magistri: So he scorn'd to be govern'd by their Dogma's, and would in no wise pin his Religion upon the Sleeve of a Philosopher, but chose rather to trust to Custom or Tradition, and to be rul'd by the Persuasions of his Ancestors, and that for no other Reason, but because the Philosophers were, for the most Part, mistaken therein, as generally delivering what was wrong in Matters of Religion or Divinity [d].

And this indeed is evident to any one, tho' but little conversant in the Heathen Writers. For if you will look into their Theogony; what more obscene, lewd and brutish? Or their Theology; what more beggarly, low and carnal? Or their Theurgy or ministerial Offices; what more filthy, butcherly and inhuman? Or that Part of their Office which they esteemed as most divine, but was

[d] Mihi enim unum satis erat, ita nobis majores nostros tradidisse. Cic. de Nat. Deorum. Lib. iii. c. iv.

Præsertim cum isti (viz. Philosophi) plurimis de rebus divinis mentiantur. Cic. de Nat. Deorum, Lib. iii. c. vi.

no other than Witchcraft or magic Sorceries.

Tho' in the Days of this univerſal Darkneſs and Error, there might be ſome, that by long and tedious Journies for the Sake of Knowledge, by an elaborate Study and Severity of Life, and by a more conſtant Application of Thought, might do ſomething towards the Correction of theſe Abominations; yet whoever reads their Works, will ſoon diſcover, that, for one Excellency worth admiring, there are a hundred Abſurdities which ought to be deſpiſed. So that to every Wiſe Man, a Chriſtian more eſpecially, they and their Admirers will ſeem to deſerve our Scorn, much more than our Envy or Imitation: For if here and there they ſay ſomething that may be rational and judicious, yet theſe Sayings look more like the Intervals of Madmen, than the Reſult of a ſettled or well inform'd Underſtanding: And as thoſe unhappy People, you know, will ſometimes talk as rationally as the moſt ſenſible; yet you would no more ſend a Perſon to *Bed-*

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I am to learn right Reaſon, than I would to your ſelf, or any other Deiſt, to be taught Chriſtianity.

But from this general Charge I will deſcend to a few Particulars: And that firſt, as to Virtue it ſelf, of which every ſtragling Sect has had as wild Opinions; ſo that it was impoſſible by their Help, ever to fix the Mind, or come to any determinate Principle; and this amongſt the polite *Greeks*, who agreed in nothing but the Name or Word, that Virtue was expreſs'd or ſignify'd by, that being allow'd to be Virtue by one, which was never eſteem'd ſuch by another. Yet as *Euripides* [e], who was *Plato*'s Companion in his Travels, in his *Phœniſſæ* ſays, they agreed as to the Nature or Word for Virtue; but as to the Nature of a virtuous Action, they had puzzled Mankind thro' a Diverſity of Opinions.

Nor is this only true of them, if per-

[e] Εἰ πᾶσι ταὐτὸ καλὸν ἦφυ σοφὸν θ' ἅμα,
Οὐκ ἦν ἂν ἀμφίλεκτ@ ἀνθρώποις ἔρις·
Νῦν δ' οὔθ' ὅμοιον οὐδὲν οὔτ' ἴσον βροτοῖς,
Πλὴν ὀνόματι. ——————

Euripidis Phœniſſæ, ver. 504, 505, &c.

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ſonally conſider'd, but may be verify'd from national Inſtances: I will mention two principally, and both allowing what, I think, is as much againſt the Light or Dictates of Nature, as any Wickedneſs or Immorality whatever. I dare ſay, no Perſon will deny it to be one of the firſt Principles of Nature and Humanity, that Mankind take care of their Offspring, both for its Preſervation, its daily Nouriſhment and Support; and accordingly the *Thebans* made a Law, obliging all under their Power to a juſt Performance of theſe Duties, (agreeably to our own Laws in this Chriſtian Nation) where, by Reaſon of their extreme Poverty, the Parents were unable to apply to the Magiſtrate for Relief [f]. Yet their Neighbours, the *Athenians*, were ſo far from being influenc'd by this excellent Law, that they allow'd the Expoſition of Infants, as judging their Deſtruction in no wiſe criminal.

[f] Νόμος οὗτος Θηβαϊκὸς ὀρθῶς ἅμα καὶ φιλανθρώπως κεί-μενος· ὁ τοῖς μάλιστα, ὅτι οὐκ ἔξεστιν ἀνδρὶ Θηβαίῳ ἐκθεῖναι παιδίον, & quæ ſequuntur. Ælian Var. Hiſt. Lib ii. c. vii.

Another

Another Thing, which, if I have any tolerable Senſe of human Nature, is as much againſt it as any other Wickedneſs, and therefore I think ought equally to be abhorr'd, is the Sin of Inceſt; and yet this, as very unnatural as it is, was allow'd by Law among the *Perſians*, and publickly avow'd by their *Magi* to be lawful, and continued to be deem'd ſo in Practice, from the Time of *Semiramis* to *Alexander the Great*, as is evident from *Laertius*, *Quintus Curtius*, and *Ovid* in his Relation of the inceſtuous Amours of *Cinyras* and *Myrrha*[g]. And the Commentator upon this Paſſage of *Quintus Curtius*, recites the Words of a Heathen Moraliſt of the firſt Rank, *That Good and Evil were now only to be diſtinguiſh'd according as the Law of divers*

[g] Καὶ ὅσιον νομίζειν μητρὶ ἢ θυγατρὶ μίγνυσθαι. Diog. Laert Proœm.

Quippe apud eas Parentibus Stupro coire cum Liberis fas eſt. Quint. Curt. Lib. viii. c. ii. Comment. ibid.

——— Gentes tamen eſſe feruntur,
In quibus & Nato genetrix & Nata Parenti
Jungitur, & pietas geminato creſcit amore.

Ovid. Metam. Lib. x. v. 331.

Countries had directly made them, and not at all to be known by the Light of Nature: So far was Man from being able to give a compleat or perfect Rule of Life, or to enact Laws agreeable to right Reaſon for the Government of the World, that all true Notions of Morality were loſt and effac'd, nothing being eſteem'd Good or Evil, as it was eſſentially in its ſelf, but altogether arbitrarily, as either in its Turn might ſerve their Intereſt, or be of Uſe to fulfil their Luſts, and gratify their Paſſions; and then the moſt vicious Practices muſt loſe their Nature, notwithſtand the innate Turpitude and eſſential Evil of them. Beſides theſe Inſtances, the *Maſſagetæ*, a People of *Scythia*, and the *Getuli*, a People of *Africa* [h], allow'd of Adultery and Inceſt in the baſeſt Manner: And our own Nation, if *Cæſar* may be believed, was in both, but in the Age immediately before Chriſtianity, more deteſtably viti-

h Τὸ γοῦν αὐτὸ παρ' οἷς μὲ δίκαιον, παρ' οἷς ϗ ἄδικον· ϗ ἄλλοις μὲν ἀγαθὸν, ἄλλοις δὲ κακόν. Diog. Laert. vit. Pyrr. Lib. iii. Sect. 84.

ous than any[i]. And the *Cilicians* maintain'd and defended Fraud, Theft, and Rapine, and honour'd the Memory of thoſe Perſons with the greateſt Reſpect, who were moſt ſucceſsful in them.

To be ſhort, I would gladly know any one national Religion, not reveal'd, that could approve itſelf to right Reaſon, or was agreeable to the Nature of God, or thoſe Notions we ought to have of him, or any Summary or Body of Laws, given at that Time to any one People under Heaven, that contained the Heads of our Duty, as to the moral Offices of Life, without any Allay of Senſuality, without a Mixture of ſomething unreaſonable, vicious or impure; or any Thing publiſh'd to the World for that End, that, if cloſely lookt into, would bear the Examination of Sobriety and Truth; or was in any Reſpect like the Law of God, *undefiled and converting the Soul:* And 'till you tell me this, I ſhall eſteem the Religion

[i] De Britannis. Uxores habent deni duodenique inter ſe communes, & maximè Fratres cum Fratribus & Parentes cum liberis. • Cæſ. Comment. Lib. v. p. 54.

of

of the Heathen World to be merely human, or worſe; and that all the abominable Idolatry, Carnalities and groſs Corruptions that attended it, were principally, if not entirely, owing to the Deficiency, or Inſufficiency of human Reaſon, from whence it was derived.

In the next Place, all Mankind was at a loſs to known their *ſummum Bonum*, or what their ultimate or ſupreme Happineſs conſiſted in, and therefore knew not to what End to direct their greateſt and moſt valuable Endeavours.

Porphyry in his Letter to *Anebo* [k], declares the utmoſt Felicity of Man, to be altogether uncertain, and that it was left to Conjecture: Of the other Philoſophers ſome plac'd it in one Thing, ſome in another. The *Stoicks*, who where chiefly follow'd, and to whom *Tully* adheres [l], declared it to conſiſt in a Life led agreeably to Nature; a ſublime Diſcovery, and much to the

[k] Θέλω οὖν παρ' ὑμῶν τ εἰς δαιμονίαν ὁδὸν ἐπιδείξασθαί μοι, κ) σὺ τίνι κεῖται ἡ αὐτῆς ὑσία; ὡδὶ μὲ γὰ ἡμῖν λογομαχία τις ἐστι πολλὴ, ἄλλ ἐξ ἀνθρωπίνων λογισμῶν τὸ ἐικαζομένω ἀγαθῶ. Porphyr. Ep. ad Aneb. ſub finem.

[l] Cic. de Officiis Lib. iii.

Honour of human Reaſon! As if a Mule or an Aſs, that dragg'd a Boat up the River *Tyber*, was not as capable of this, as the *Roman* Orator.

I may here ſay ſomething as to Providence in the Government of the World, becauſe you tell us in Page 15. that without the Help of Philoſophy, we might from natural Reaſon, naked and untaught, learn to acknowledge the Providence of God, and be thankful for the Benefits of it. I wonder then how this came to lie buried and undiſcover'd for ſo long a Tract of Time; for it was not ſo much as nam'd in the old World, 'till, about 370 Years before *Chriſt*, *Plato* is ſaid to be the firſt that ever mention'd[m] it: However, this was actually deny'd by a great Party of Philoſophers, and they that had the cleareſt Notion of it ſeem'd to limit the Exerciſe of it to this World, their Knowledge of another Life being very little, or none at all; inſomuch that *Tully* brings the *Illyrian* Robber *Harpalus* upon the Stage, declaring his

[m] Diog. Laert. vit. Plat. Lib. iii. Sect. 24.

 ſucceſs-

ſucceſsful Robberies to be ſo many living Inſtances againſt the Providence of God: Tho' in general he delivers himſelf exceeding well in his ſecond Book [n] *de Natura Deorum*; yet in his third he ſeems to queſtion whether or no the Gods do at all inſpect or govern the Affairs of the World, by reaſon of thoſe ſundry Misfortunes which befel a great many of his own Nation, whoſe worthy Deeds, in his Opinion, ought in this Life moſt juſtly to have entitled them to the Favour of Heaven. Tho' to me the Notion of Providence ſeems ſo eſſential to the Idea of a God, that I can no more think of God without a Providence, than I can of a King without a Government, or imagine a Sea without Water.

But then, as to the Unity of the Deity, however ſome private Perſons might be perſuaded, yet, notwithſtand-

[n] Ex quo efficitur id quod volumus, Deorum Providentiâ Mundum adminiſtrari; atqui neceſſe eſt ſi ſint Dii, ut profecto ſunt, animanteis eſſe, nec ſolum animanteis, ſed etiam rationis compotes, inter ſeque quaſi civili conciliatione & Societate conjunctos, unum Mundum ut communem Rempublicam atque Urbem aliquam regenteis. Cic. de Natura Deor. Lib. ii. Sect. 3.

ing

ing you tell us the Heathen Deiſts (who you mean, I know not) agreed in the Belief of one ſelf-exiſtent Agent or God, Polytheiſm was the prevailing Opinion of Mankind, and *Tully* moſt certainly gave into it; and in his ſecond Book *De Nat. Deorum*, declares that the Gods govern'd the World by having a good Agreement and right Underſtanding with one another [o].

In the 15th Page, *&c.* you ſum up the Excellencies of human Reaſon, and enlarge upon its mighty Abilities; but what Occaſion for this at preſent, when God has done every Thing ſo admirably for us, that Reaſon has nothing left to do, but to aſſent to it and obey it? Unleſs you would rob him of the Glory due to his Name, and moſt invidiouſly detract from the inexpreſſible Greatneſs of ſo immenſe a Bleſſing, as preſumptuouſly ſuppoſing your ſelf, or any Number or Order of Men, equally able to beſtow it: Or to be plain, could you have talked after this Manner,

[o] Cic. de Nat. Deor. Lib. ii. Sect. 59, 60, 61.

had

had you liv'd in a State of Nature, and had nothing but bare Reaſon to inſtruct you? *Tully*, who liv'd in that State, aſſigns Reaſon its proper Province, without dreaming of its having any Abilities ſo great and extenſive, and therefore no ſuch Appointments. So that I fear in all you write of this Nature, you actually abuſe the Light of Revelation by making it its own Adverſary. For can you live in ſo much Light, and ſhall no Glimmering break in upon your Soul? Take care therefore you don't add to your Ingratitude the moſt dangerous Impiety, by turning God's Gift upon him, and attacking him with his own Reaſon.

In the 24th Page, you ſay that the Heathens worſhipp'd God by many Mediators, Demons, and Heroes, not knowing the true Mediator. Alas! how ſhould they know him who was not yet reveal'd to them nor come into the World? This therefore is to be attributed to another Cauſe; to their Want of Underſtanding, to their Ignorance in Religious and Spiritual Affairs,

fairs, and to the Deluſions of Devils. What you inſinuate here I cannot conceive without Horror: I have read indeed, in the Heathen Theology, of the Diſtribution of Spiritual Powers, into Gods, Demons, Heroes, Archons, &c. but I never met with any of theſe that was call'd a Mediator.

Plato [p] tells us, theſe Demons are a Sort of Beings of a mixt Compoſition, partly Divine, partly Human, that they carried Meſſages between the Gods and Men; But on this Account, were it true, they can no more be ſaid to be Mediators, than a Poſt that carries a Letter can be ſaid to be the Arbitrator or Mediator of the Affair it contains.

Pythagoras, according to *Thales*, taught the Air was full of them, that they diſturb'd the Reſt of Men by frightful Dreams, and that they could inflict Diſeaſes both upon Man and

[p] Καὶ γὰρ πᾶν τὸ δαιμόνιον μεταξύ ἐστι θεοῦ τε καὶ θνητοῦ φύσεως, ἑρμηνεύον καὶ διακονοῦν ἐνθάδε ἀνθρώπων, καὶ ἀνθρώποις τὰ παρὰ θεῶν, &c. Plato in Sympoſ. 213. Vide Annotationes.

Beaſt,

Beaſt. [q] *Macrobius* ſays, they have their Names from Δαήμονες, as knowing the Affairs of Men: To which *Lactantius* agrees, [r] but tells us, they were unclean Spirits, the Authors of all Manner of Evil, and that the Devil was their Prince, being call'd by *Triſmegiſtus* Δαιμονιάρχης, Prince of Dæmons or Devils; that the Magicians play'd all their Tricks by their Aſſiſtance, and that their Buſineſs was to deceive or impoſe upon the Senſes of Men: As to their Nature, Office and Power, his Cotemporary [s] *Jamblichus* will at large inform you; but I do aſſure you, that neither theſe nor any other Order of their Gods were ſtyl'd Mediators; and what I fear you aim at by mentioning it here, I have too much Charity to declare; yet I cannot but further remark what you ſay, that they worſhipp'd God by theſe Demons,

[q] Macrobii Saturnalia, Lib. 1. c. 23.

[r] Lactantii Inſtituriones, De Origine Erroris, Lib. 2. c. 14.

[s] Jamblichus de Myſteriis Ægyptiorum, Sect. 1. c. 5, 9. in prima Sectione.

whereas they had very little or no Knowledge of the true God, these Demons and other inferior Deities being in every Nation, the *Jews* excepted, the Idols of the People, and with the rest of their superior Gods were equally worshipped and adored by them.

From this you advance very boldly and declare, that the best Heathens believ'd and taught the Assistance of Divine Grace to enable Men to be virtuous and good. So very unwilling are you to allow we are in any Respect the better for being Christians. It is a new Doctrine to me, and, as at first Sight it appears, I know not whether the Impiety of it is most to be abhorr'd, or its Absurdity to be laugh'd at: My own Persuasion is unshaken, that as the *Law was given by Moses, so Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ*, whether you understand thereby Favour with God, or Spiritual Comfort and Abilities.

I have indeed read of sundry Sorts of Inspiration, Afflation, Enthusiasm, Extasy, and as yourself may likewise

in *Jamblichus*, [t] of People, that by the Power and Impulſe of evil Spirits were hardned againſt the Senſe of Fire and extreme Burnings, and of their cutting themſelves with Lances, as on the Altars of *Baal*, and as to Appearance without any Senſe of Pain. But their Inſpiration never was any other than that of their Prieſts, Propheteſſes and Sibylls, when being poſſeſs'd and acted on by the Devil, they deliver'd his Oracles: I never heard that they thought their Gods were able to change Mens Minds from evil to good, to infuſe new Habits into the Soul, or by inviſible Operations to create virtuous Diſpoſitions, or by Spiritual Aſſiſtances to continue or advance the ſame to good Effect: But to confirm the Truth of this audacious Aſſertion, you give us a Sentence from the ſecond Book of *Tully de Nat. Deorum*, *Nemo igitur vir magnus* (*bonus* had been much better for your Purpoſe) *ſine aliquo divino afflatu unquam fuit*. Had you not alledg'd this in Proof of your Doctrine,

[t] Jamblichus de Myſt. Ægypt. Sect. 3. c. 5, 6.

I ſhould not have ſaid what I have as to Inſpiration, *&c.* I will therefore enquire into the true Meaning of it, and ſee what Service it will do you.

In this Place *Tully* is repeating the great Actions of ſeveral *Roman* Worthies, and reminds us alſo of ſome *Grecian* Heroes (tho' ſomewhat Romantick) celebrated by *Homer*; and acquaints us, that all they did was owing to the perſonal Appearance of their Gods, coming to their Aſſiſtance in all Difficulties, animating, encouraging, and as it were inſpiring them to great Enterprizes, and uncommon Undertakings.

And indeed the whole Senſe and true Meaning of theſe Words is moſt agreeably given us by the admirable Mr. *Addiſon*, who, in his Deſcription of the perſonal Bravery and Conduct of the Great Duke of *Marlborough* at the Battle of *Blenheim*, ſays, that he

Inſpir'd repuls'd Battalions to engage,
And taught the doubtful Battle where
to rage.

So

So that I leave you to your divine *Afflatus* of *Tully*, hoping you will not take it ill, if by your Uſe and Application of theſe Words at preſent I profeſs that I am the better enabled to judge how you may be inſpir'd yourſelf.

After this you proceed to tax what his Lordſhip ſays in the 16th Page, *That among the Philoſophers, many of the greateſt have laid it down as a general Maxim, that all Things were uncertain.* You ſuppoſe his Lordſhip means the new Academy, in ſhort you know not who his Lordſhip means, whether new, old, or middle Academy; but for the Truth of this I refer you to *Diog. Laertius*'s [u] Life of *Pyrrho*, who there makes a fourfold Diviſion of the whole Body of Philoſophers. Firſt *Zetetics*, who were always enquiring after Truth. Secondly *Sceptics*, who always ſuſpended their Aſſent, and if any Thing appear'd like the Truth, would evermore obſcure and puzzle it. Thirdly, *Ephectics*, who after the moſt ſucceſs-

[u] Diogenes Laertius's *Life of* Pyrrho.

ful

ful Enquiry were ſtill unſatisfy'd. Fourthly *Aporetics*, or profeſs'd Doubters: Of this laſt Sort was *Pherecydes*, as appears from his Letter to *Thales*: As alſo, *Arceſilas*, *Democritus*, *Protagoras*, *Pyrrho*, *Timon* of *Phlius*, *Nauſiphanes*, &c.

Now as there was this Sect ſo very diffident and diſtruſtful, ſo was there another as preſumptuous and aſſuming; and theſe call'd themſelves φιλαλήθες or Lovers of Truth, who, like the *Sceptics* of this preſent Age, were always clamorous for Truth, and to their everlaſting Honour, both ancient and modern be it ſpoken, *Epicurus* was of their Party.

You further affirm, as in *pag.* 25. they did not really doubt, but the contrary is very evident from *Tully*, [x] who ſays, that the Truth lay hid in a deep

[x] Qui nihil cognoſci, nihil percipi, nihil ſciri poſſe dixerunt; anguſtos ſenſus, imbecillos animos, brevia Curricula Vitæ; & (ut Democritus) in profundo veritatem eſſe demerſam, opinionibus & inſtitutis omnia teneri, nihil veritati relinqui deinceps, omnia tenebris circumfuſa, dixerunt. Cic. Academ. Quæſt. Lib. 1. Sect. 12.

Abyſs.

Abyſs. Nothing could be known with Certainty, but was as the ſundry Opinions and Inſtitutions of Philoſophers made it; and *Porphyry*, [y] a great Man in all Reſpects (his Enmity to Chriſtianity excepted) in his Book *de Anima*, declares there is no Truth or Certainty to be had in Philoſophy, but that all Things were doubtful and uncertain.

You begin your 26th Page as follows, *with Reſpect to the Immortality of the Soul and a future State, they were not ſo doubtful and uncertain as his Lordſhip repreſents them*; with what Clearneſs and Certainty they wrote of theſe Matters will appear hereafter: But to be ſhort, whatever they affirm'd as to theſe was not owing to the Strength of their own Underſtanding, or the Light of Nature, but was altogether to be attributed to Revelation: *Thales*, [z] who firſt taught the Immortality of the Soul, is known to have receiv'd this and his Knowledge in Geometry from the *Egyptians* or *Jews*, it being

y Porphyr. de Anima.
z Laertius in vita Thaletis.

that

that by Heathen Writers, the *Egyptian Magi*, *Gymnoſophiſts* and *Jews* were deem'd one People: But ſo far was this Philoſopher from having any true Notion of the ſpiritual Nature of a Human Soul, that he affirm'd Amber and the Loadſtone to have Souls, by Reaſon of their attractive Quality: *Pythagoras*, who according to *Tully*, [a] came into *Italy* in the Reign of *Tarquinius Superbus*, taught the Immortality of the Soul, which he learnt of *Pherecydes Syrus*, whom *Tully* there affirms, though contrary to *Laertius*, to have been the Author of it: But it is very evident, that what *Pythagoras* knew of the Immortality of the Soul, he had from the *Egyptian* and *Perſian Magi*, who always taught and maintain'd that the Soul was Immortal, and this undoubtedly they had originally from the *Jews*, though ſomewhat obſcurely retain'd. And indeed, *Pythagoras* is by ſome [b] aſſerted to have been a *Jew* by Extraction, to have read

[a] Cic. Tuſculan. Quæſt. Lib. 1. c. 16.
[b] Lactantius de vera ſapientia, Lib. 4. c. 2.

the

the Writings of *Moſes*, and to have been circumcis'd in *Egypt*. However this may be, the Reaſon given by *Laertius*, upon which he grounded the Immortality of the Soul, will hardly bear examining; and then his Doctrine of Tranſmigration, as abſurd as it was, he had from the *Egyptian* Prieſts. By which we may ſee, what a dark and caliginous Condition Mankind was in; ſo far from conceiving any ſpiritual Intereſt or Concern, that the Soul, by the Exerciſe of its own Powers, was not able to aſſure itſelf of its own Immortality, till *Life and Immortality were brought to Light thro' the Goſpel.*

What *Plato* knew of this, he attain'd the ſame Way with the former; for he travell'd into *Egypt*, and convers'd with the *Egyptian* Prophets and *Magi*, as may be ſeen from *Philoſtratus*, *Laertius*, *Lactantius*, and St. *Jerom*: So that whatever they wrote on this Head, cannot be ſaid to be the Reſult of mere Reaſon or the moſt intenſe Thought, but was collected from ſome ſcatter'd Remains that might be left among the *Egyptians* by the Children

of *Iſrael*, or perhaps from immediate Converſe with the *Jews* themſelves: And notwithſtanding this Doctrine of the Soul's Immortality was ſo generally and publickly taught; yet the *Stoicks*, a very conſiderable Sect of Philoſophers, ſaid the Soul was Corporeal [c] and Material; that it might continue longer than the Body, but was not Immortal; but was finally ſubject to Change and Alteration, to Diſſolution and Decay, which will more fully appear upon examining your Quotation from *Tully*.

It is to be obſerv'd, that in this Colloquy, *Tully* declares himſelf not to talk deciſively like an Oracle, but to deliver what ſeem'd moſt probable, and might be ſuppos'd to come neareſt the Truth; his Words you quote exactly, *Permanere animos arbitramur*, &c. that by the Conſent of all Nations the Soul was held to be Immortal. But in

[c] Ἐι μεμφόμεθα τὰς ψυχὰς, πῶς αὐτὰς χωρεῖ ὁ αἰής; πῶς δὲ καὶ ἡ γὴ χωρεῖ τὰ τοσαῦτα αἰῶνος θαπτόμενα σώματα; ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐνθάδε, ἡ τούτων τροφὸς οὖσα τινα ἐπιδιαμονὴν μεταβολὴ καὶ διάλυσις χώραν ἄλλοις νεκροῖς ποιεῖ· οὕτως καὶ εἰς τὸν αἰέρα μεθισάμενα ψυχαὶ, ἐπὶ ποσὸν συμμένουσαι μεταβάλλουσι καὶ χέουσι, καὶ ἐξάπτουσι εἰς τὸ τοῦ ὅλου σπερματικὸν λόγον ἀναλαμβανόμεναι, καὶ τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον χώραν ταῖς προτεροικιζομέναις παρέχουσι. Marcus Antoninus Lib. iv. c. 21. Diog. Laert. Lib. vii. Seg. 156, 157.

this

this he greatly contradicts himſelf; for but a little before he defines Death to be a Separation [d] of Soul and Body. But, ſays he, *Some deny this, affirming there is no ſuch Separation, but that Soul and Body undergo the ſame Fate, that both die and periſh together: Others, that there is an actual Separation, that the Soul ſurvives the Body, though but for a certain Time, and then loſes its Exiſtence, and ceaſes any longer to be. Others, that it was Immortal and continu'd for ever.* So that I find the Immortality of the Soul was not ſo univerſally believ'd as that Aſſertion would imply.

In another Part of his Book he gives us an Account, of the Origin, Operations, Powers, as well as of the Immortality and Duration of the Soul, [e] but declares, that God alone muſt

[d] Mors igitur ipſa, quæ videtur notiſſima res eſſe, quid ſit, primum eſt videndum. Sunt enim qui diſceſſum animi a Corpore putent eſſe mortem. Sunt qui nullum cenſeant fieri diſceſſum, ſed una animum & corpus occidere, animumque in corpore extingui: qui diſcedere animum cenſent, alii ſtatim diſſipari, alii diu permanere, alii ſemper. Quid ſit porro ipſe animus, aut ubi, aut unde, magna diſſenſio eſt, aliis Cor ipſum animus videtur. Cic. Tuſc. Quæſt. Lib 1. Sec. 9.

[e] Harum ſententiarum quæ vera ſit, Deus aliquis viderit, quæ veriſimillima, magna quæſtio eſt. Cic. Tuſc. Lib. i. Seq. 1.

but

determine which Opinion was true; but himſelf was not able ſo much as to gueſs which was moſt probable: Nay, ſo far were they from being certain as to the Soul's Immortality, that ſome of them deny'd the very Being of a Soul, of which Number was [f] *Dicearchus* and *Ariſtoxenus*, and that for no other Reaſon, but becauſe they could not conceive the Nature of it.

From what has been ſaid, I don't ſee how any thing could be learnt with Certainty from the Writings of the Philoſophers, beyond what our Senſes report to us; neither can it reaſonably be expected there ſhould: For altho' Truth, as to its Exiſtence, cannot be deny'd; yet conſidering the Shallowneſs of our Capacity, the Difficulty of Enquiry, the Impoſitions our Senſes are ſubject too, and the fallible Means of Knowledge, it ſeems to me impoſſible, by the Direction of human Reaſon only or the beſt Uſe of our natural Powers, ever to come to the Knowledge of it. Not that I would depreciate my own

[f] Dicearchus quidem & Ariſtoxenus quia difficilis erat animi, quid aut qualis eſſet intelligentia, nullum omnino animum eſſe dixerunt.

Nature,

Nature, or ſay any Thing that ſhould tend to the Diſhonour of Humanity, but muſt freely declare, that while other Men are examining Revelation by Reaſon, I will examine Reaſon by Revelation, and ſhall always judge that Reaſon to be moſt true, moſt convincing and ſatisfactory, that has the Suffrage and Authority of Revelation to ſupport its Concluſions and warrant its Dictates.

Beſides, theſe Philoſophers were not only miſtaken as to the Nature and Providence of God, the Immortality of the Soul, and the eſſential Differences of Good and Evil, and the ultimate or ſupreme Happineſs of Man, (the Reſt and only Support and Remedy againſt all the Evils of this Life) by Reaſon whereof, Mankind was ſo groſly miſled as to the Worſhip of God, that they fell into the moſt abominable Idolatry, were loſt as to the Dignity and Excellency of their own Nature, as having no Aſſurance that any Part of them ſhould live hereafter; were confounded and abuſed as to the true Notion of Vice and Virtue, and therefore err'd every Day moſt ſhamefully as to

Practice,

Practice, for want of an unerring Guide to direct them in their Duty; that which is Virtue in one Place, being Vice in another: But, indeed, in every reſpect they grew extreme ridiculous, andthat very early at *Rome*: *Terence* by Way of Deriſion, inventing the [g] *Gnathonici*, a new Sect. And [h] *Horace*, who underſtood human Nature, as well as the beſt of them, aſcribes his Neglect of religious Worſhip, as groſs and impious as it was, to be owing to their Uncertainty, which *occaſion'd* him to be toſs'd to and fro, like a Ship in a Storm, knowing not where to caſt Anchor, nor how to ſettle. I ſhall take but little Notice of the Words of *Socrates* you repeat from *Tully*, in regard to a Future-State; for *Tully* himſelf did not believe them; he delivers them with a Sneer, — *Sunt & vetera & à Græcis*; and you know the

[g] —Tanquam Philoſophorum habent Diſciplinæ ex ipſis Vocabula, Paraſiti itidem ut Gnathonici vocentur.
Terent Eunuch. Act. ii. Sc. ii.

[h] Parcus Deorum cultor & infrequens,
Inſanientis dum ſapientiæ
Conſultus erro, nunc retrorſum
Vela dare, atque iterare curſus
Cogor relictos. ———
Hor. Ode xxxiv. Lib. i

Greeks

Greeks were always ſuſpected, and that neither *Tully* nor any other had any great Opinion of their Integrity: Neither do I think they would trouble themſelves about another World, when all, or the greateſt Part of them thought their Exiſtence and Being to be fully ended and determin'd in this.

Before I take my Leave of your Philoſophers, you muſt allow me to remark what *Tully* ſays of them [i], in the ſecond Book of his *Tuſculan Queſtions*; that they were addicted to all Manner of Vices, and never could behave, in any Reſpect, according to the Rules they laid down: From whence it is evident all they ſaid was more for Applauſe than Conviction, more out of Vanity and Oſtentation, than with any real Deſign to inſtruct or reform Mankind. And of theſe the four you chiefly mention, were guilty of the foulеſt Crimes, and groſſeſt Immoralities. Was not *Plato* inſatiably fond of inordinate Luſts, and that in a moſt deteſtable Manner, ſparing neither Sex? For he had his *Phædrus*, his *Stella*, and

[i] Cic. Tuſcul. Quæſt. Lib. ii.

Alexis,

Alexis, as well as his *Archeanaſſa*. Was not *Socrates* ſaid to be ſo addicted to unnatural Luſts, that his Name became a Proverb to after Ages? Was not *Seneca* baniſh'd *Rome* for his Adulteries, and *Tully* upbraided with Inceſt, and reproach'd by *Salluſt* in the open *Senate*, for debauching his own Daughter? And theſe are the Men, from whoſe wild Opinions and ſcatter'd Scraps, you would make the World believe you could collect a Body of Laws and Doctrines, as ſerviceable and uſeful as the Goſpel. Theſe are they, whoſe weak and empty Authorities you would urge in Oppoſition to the bleſſed *Jeſus, in whom was no Sin, neither was Guile ever found in his Mouth.*

I ſhall not ſay any thing concerning the Papiſts, either as to their Idolatry, Superſtitions or Perſecutions: I pray for the Reformation of theſe and all other Errors, and am ſorry ſuch Reproaches can be ſaid of Chriſtians. Neither ſhall I engage in Defence or Excuſe of the Patrons of Fatality or abſolute Decrees; it being *impoſſible but that Offences will come*; and may God

God of his Goodneſs avert the Woe denounc'd to the Cauſes of them.

It muſt be own'd, indeed, that if we conſult the Hiſtory of the Church from the Days of the Apoſtles to this very Time, we cannot find an age wherein it has been free from theſe unhappy Circumſtances, but that it has been diſtreſs'd with Scepticks, Hereticks and Schiſmaticks at once; and as we cannot, without extream Sorrow call to remembrance the Times that are paſt; ſo neither can we look upon our own, without Horror and Regret. Such is the State of Chriſtianity at preſent amongſt us, lamentable indeed to be conſider'd, but ſuch as cannot be deny'd. To what this is owing, will ſoon appear, if we conſider how it has been the continual Study of a great many, daily to traduce the Holy Scriptures, and to pervert the true Senſe of them, to countenance the baſe Deſigns of Infidelity and Licentiouſneſs, or otherwiſe to puzzle the Truth with obſcure Notions, or to weaken, and impair it by frivolous Diſtinctions; by the malign Influence whereof Men have

been miſguided in Practice, corrupted in their Morals, poiſon'd as to Principle, and their whole Souls poſſeſs'd with invincible Prejudices againſt thoſe Truths, which ſhould ſerve both for their Guidance and Conviction: Yet, of all the Sectaries that ever were, none are ſo dangerous, none more maliciouſly ſet againſt Chriſtianity than our Heathen Deiſts, (Chriſtians I cannot call them, and indeed they abhor the Appellation) for theſe ſtrike at the Roots of our Religion; are not diſſatisfy'd with this or that Doctrine; have no Scruples of Conſcience touching Communion; nor expreſs the leaſt Offence towards our Liturgy or Diſcipline; theſe Things are beneath their Regard: They think they have ſeen ſo much Time loſt and miſpent in reforming Religion, that now they are reſolved to give the finiſhing Stroke, by removing it wholly. And that you may not fail to ſignalize your ſelf in this great Work, you advance very remarkably, attempting nothing leſs than to prove Chriſtians worſe than Atheiſts, becauſe they diſagree about the Fundamentals both of natural and

Plea p. 33, 34.

reveal'd

reveal'd Religion: And to effect this, you tell us, there are thoſe that queſtion whether there are three Gods, or one God; but who theſe are I know not. You tell us alſo, that the Unity of God is the primary Article of natural and reveal'd Religion: How ſure it may be ſo of natural Religion, you that are ſo compleat *a Maſter of it*, can beſt declare; but in reveal'd we find a Trinity of Perſons in the Unity of the ſame Deity; and according to the Goſpel, you muſt believe in the Son and the Holy Ghoſt, as well as the Father, *there being three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghoſt, and theſe three are one.*

You further quote a Perſon, who has wrote Remarks upon Dr. *Clarke*'s Catechiſm, whoſe Words are, *That there is but one God is probably argu'd from Reaſon and antient Tradition, and is certainly prov'd from Scripture: But that the one God is the Father only, excluſive of all other Perſons, is not known by the Light of Nature to be true, but is known by the Light of Scripture to be falſe, and is by all the ancient Churches accounted Hereſy.* I muſt own I never ſaw the Ca-

techiſm or the Remarks, but am ſo far from condemning it with you, for an extravagant Falſhood, that I judge it to be very rational and very conſonant to the Chriſtian Faith; for no Man can demonſtrate the Unity of God with that Certainty from Reaſon, that I can prove it from Scripture; and the Reaſon of the ancient World moſt certainly was altogether inſufficient and utterly unable to do this, or they had never gone into Polytheiſm ſo univerſally, as they did: For that the Religion of thoſe Days, whether of Heathens or Heathen Deiſts (if there were any ſuch) conſiſted in the Adoration of a Multiplicity of Gods, is too notorious to be deny'd. And then that the ancient Church taught the Son and the Holy Ghoſt to be equal in Godhead and one with the Father, is evident from the Hiſtorians that wrote about the Time of the *Arian* and *Macedonian* Hereſy, when the Divinity of theſe two Perſons was principally controverted: Take their Teſtimonies as follows, by which you ſee, they never thought the one God to be the Father only, excluſive of the other Perſons; as

Socra-

Socrates [k], ſpeaking of the Son only, ſays, that *He was coexiſtent, conſubſtantial, coeternal with the Father*; and *Sozomen* [l], that the Son alſo was coeternal with the Father: And *Socrates* again [m], That the Exiſtence of the Son was coeternal with the Father's. And then when they ſpeak of the whole Trinity of Perſons, their Style is [n], as a Trinity equal in Glory; and more fully and expreſly the ſame Author [o] declares, that in a Trinity of Perſons, there exiſted one and the ſame Deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, being equal in Power and equal in Glory alſo. To confirm all which, you may look upon theſe further Teſtimonies from *Epiphanius* [p]; all which are ſo very

k Ἐυπαράχων καὶ ἰσυπόσαλος καὶ συναίδιος. Socr. Lib. iii. c. 18.

l Συναΐδιον τῷ παλεὶ τὸν ὑὸν. Sozom. Lib. vii. c. xii.

m Ἀρχὴν ὑπάρξεως δεῖναι τῷ ὑῷ τὸ Θεῖν, καὶ ἀυλὸν συναΐδιον εἶναι τῷ πατρὶ. Socrates Lib. v. c. xviii.

n Τριάδα ἰσότιμόν τε καὶ ἰσοδύναμον. Sozom. Lib. vi. c. 22.

o Ἐν ὑποσάσει τριῶν προσώπων ἰσοτίμαν καὶ ἰσοδύναμον μίαν καὶ τὴν ἀυλὴν ὁμολογῶσι θεότηλα παλρὸς καὶ ὑῦ καὶ ἁγίυ πνεύματος. Sozom. Lib. vii. c. ix.

p Βαπλίσαλε ἀυλὸς εἰς μίαν ὄναμα παλρὸς καὶ ὑῦ καὶ ἁγίυ πνεύματος εἰς τὴν κυριακὴν ὀναμασίαν τῆς τριάδος, &c. Ἵνα δείξῃ ὅτι τῦ ὀνόματος μηδεμίαν ἀλλόιωσιν εἶναι τῆς μιᾶς ὑπόληψος. Epiphan. Herod. Heref. p. 50.

Εἷς γὰρ ἡμῶν ἐσιν ὁ Θεὸς, παλὴρ καὶ ὑὸς καὶ ἅγιον πνεῦμα· τρεῖς ὑποσάσεις, μία κυριότης, μία θεότης, μία δοξολογία καὶ οὐ πολλοὶ Θεοί. Nicol. Heref. p. 80.

Διὸ

very full and expreſſive of the ſame Deity in the three Perſons, having the ſame Exiſtence, Power and Supremacy, without the leaſt Excluſion, Diverſity or Diſtinction of either; that by the little acquaintance which you ſee I have with Antiquity, I hope it appears how ſcandalouſly falſe your Aſſertion in the 36th Page is, *That it was the unanimous Faith of all tha antient* Antenicene *and* Nicene *Churches, drawn from Scripture, that the one ſupreme God is the Father, in Diſtinction to the Son and Spirit*; adding alſo, that *Neither of which divine Perſons are ever ſtyl'd the one God.* And this you ſubjoin as ſtrengthening what you had ſaid before; and it may be as you ſay; neither do I ſee the leaſt Reaſon againſt it. That our Lord, the bleſſed Saviour of the World, did not declare himſelf in ſuch Manner, is allow'd by *Lactantius* q, and the Reaſon alſo given by

q Διὸ μιαν θεότητα οἶδεν ἡ ἐκκλησία, εἷς Θεὸς ὁ τ ἀληθείας Παλής. Παλὴς τέλειος ἱυπόσατος, υἱὸς τέλειος ἱυπόσαλος, ϗ ἅγιον πνεῦμα τέλειον ἱυπόσαλον, μία θεότης, μία διαπολεία, μία κυελόλης· διὸ πάνλη σαφῶς κεκηρύχασιν αἱ θεῖαι γραφαὶ, ἵνα Θεὸν τουλίσι τριάδα ὁμοούσιον ἀϰὶ οὔσαν τ αὐτῆς ταυτότητος, τ αὐλῆς κυριότηλος. Noet. Her. p. 483.

q Ille vero exhibuit Deo fidem; docuit enim quod unus Deus eſt, eumque ſolum coli oportere, nec unquam ſe

by him: For ſays he, ſpeaking of our Saviour, *He never ſaid he was God, or the one God, ſince ſuch a Declaration never would have anſwered the End of his Miſſion*; it would have tended more fully to eſtabliſh Polytheiſm and Idolatry, which he came to deſtroy, and have raiſed falſe Notions of his divine Nature, that it might be ſeparate or diſtinct from that of the Father; but he ſaid of himſelf, *I and my Father are one:* And the Son and the Holy Ghoſt are frequently call'd God in Scripture, have the Attributes of the divine Nature given them, and by the Primitive Church confeſs'd to be equal in Exiſtence, Power, Majeſty and Glory, *&c.* with the Father.

You ſtill proceed to talk of Dr. *Clarke's* Catechiſm, and the Remarks upon it: I am a Stranger to the whole Controverſy; but if you will have my Opinion, as to divine Ordinances, which you here touch upon, I will freely give it you. Obedience to ſuch Precepts is, in its

ſe ipſe Deum dixit, quia non ſervaſſet fidem; ſi miſſus ut Deos tolleret, & unum aſſereret, induceret alium præter unum. Hoc erat non de uno Deo facere præconium, nec ejus qui miſerat, ſed ſuum proprium negotium gerere, ac ſe ab eo, quem illuſtratum venerat, ſeparare. Lactant. Lib. iv. de vera Sap. c. xiv.

Nature

Nature, equal or the ſame with any other Virtue, and Diſobedience to them is a moral Evil, or worſe, as having Impiety added to its Enormity. And in Matters of Religion the Obſervation of divine Ordinances has an equal Tendency to Salvation with moral Duties; it is egregiouſly ſinful to contemn them, and without the Obſervation of them, the moſt virtuous have no claim to Salvation; tho' the wicked may be loſt with them, and by their Wickedneſs forfeit all the Benefits and Privileges of them. The Covenant of Grace being made upon certain Conditions, into which all muſt be admitted, according to divine Inſtitution and Appointment, neither has it promiſed Salvation to the moſt virtuous Unbeliever.

But leſt any Authority or Reverence ſhould be given to the Ordinances of God, on this Account; leſt Holineſs ſhould be preferr'd to Morality, and the Chriſtian Diſpenſation get ground of the rational Scheme, you think *Reaſon*, (as Page 49.) *if Men would make a right Uſe of it, to be equally ſufficient for obtaining the divine Favour and Accep-*

tance,

tance, and therefore (without the Help of the Goſpel) a ſufficient Guide in Matters of Religion. Can any thing be more impiouſly or audaciouſly thrown in the Face of a divine Revelation? And this, in the Cloſe, you will prove from Reaſon and Scripture. What Service Reaſon could do you in former Times, has been pretty well ſhewn already; and I am very certain you would be as far to ſeek, as ever the ancient World was, had you not Revelation to abuſe. And as for Scripture, what you have hitherto quoted, is moſt grievouſly wreſted and miſapplied; but I think none more than the Text that offers, *Acts* x. 34, 35. *Of a Truth I perceive that God is no Reſpecter of Perſons; but in every Nation he that feareth God and doth Righteouſneſs, is accepted with him.*

What you would infer from this Scripture is, that all Men of every Perſuaſion, whether Pagan or Mahometan, Deiſt or *Jew*, have an equal Claim to the Mercy and Favour of God with any Chriſtian, upon Condition of their doing Righteouſneſs, and behaving according to the Laws and Precepts of

Morality: So that the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity brings no Advantage to any Man; notwithſtanding we do moſt aſſuredly believe, that our Saviour was call'd *Jeſus*, becauſe he would more eſpecially *ſave his People that believe in him, from their Sins*, and are alſo told, excluſive of all other Aſſurances, that there is *no other Name under Heaven given, whereby Men ſhall or can be ſav'd.*

How far theſe Words will maintain ſuch an impious Doctrine, which robs Chriſtianity of all its glorious Privileges, and debaſes it to ſo low a Degree, will ſoon appear, if we attend to the Occaſion of them.

Cornelius being a Religious Gentile, and one that had evidenc'd the good Diſpoſition and pious Temper of his Soul, by frequent Acts of Charity and Devotion, is by the Appearance of an Angel, vouchſafed the Direction of Heaven, and order'd to ſend for *Peter*, to inſtruct him what he ought to do further. Accordingly his Servants are diſpatch'd to *Joppa*, who find *Peter* at his Devotions, during which he ſaw a Viſion, and was thereby admoniſh'd of the

the great Error of the *Jews*, in perſuading themſelves that Salvation belong'd to them only, and enabled alſo with Boldneſs to declare, that according to the great Command and original Commiſſion of his Maſter, he was *to teach and baptize all Nations*, without Exception, that God was *no reſpecter of Perſons*, but that all were the Children of God, by Faith in *Chriſt Jeſus*, *There being neither* Jew *nor* Greek, *bond nor free*, *Male nor Female*, *for free we all are in* Chriſt Jeſus; *and if* Chriſt's, *then* Abraham's *Seed and Heirs according to the Promiſe*; which Promiſe was long before made to *Abraham*, that not any one or other Nation, but *that all Generations of the Earth ſhould be bleſſed in him*. The Apoſtle hereby being fully convinc'd of this Truth, goes immediately to *Cornelius*, magnifies the Goodneſs of God in the very extenſive Bleſſing of the Goſpel, as being in no wiſe limited or confin'd to any one favourite People, God being no Reſpecter of Perſons, but that all Nations under Heaven were equally capable of his Favour and Love. And then that a bare

doing of Righteouſneſs may not be eſteem'd of it ſelf ſufficient, he is, by the Apoſtle taught what to do further, in order to be ſav'd; that is, to be baptized and to be made a Member of *Chriſt*'s Church, according to his own Inſtitution; and being ſo admitted into it to be entitled to all the Bleſſings and Promiſes of it. In ſpeaking ſomewhat more fully to this, I will briefly obſerve, that if his good Works had been of themſelves ſufficient, there was no Occaſion for inſtructing him what he muſt do further, and the Apoſtle alſo muſt be guilty of a very ſuperfluous Act in having him baptized: All which is done to manifeſt the Neceſſity of complying with divine Ordinances, tho' adminiſtred by Men, as is plain from the Silence of the heavenly Viſion, in not giving *Cornelius* Inſtructions, but ſending him to *Peter* for them. So that no more is to be underſtood by his being accepted with God, on Account of his Righteouſneſs and good Works, than that they were ſo many Evidences of his *not being far from the Kingdom of Heaven*, and Proofs of his great Worthineſs, as well as the

moſt

moſt devout *Jew*, to be admitted into, and be made a Member of, the viſible Church of *Chriſt*. From all which, duly conſider'd, we have the Teſtimony of Heaven and Earth to confirm the Excellency and Neceſſity of divine Ordinances; that Heaven it ſelf would not ſuperſede nor vary from its eſtabliſh'd Order, but that all Men muſt ſubmit to and abide by the Ordinances of *Chriſt*, as well as their own Righteouſneſs, if they will have their good Works finally accepted, or their evil ones forgiven.

What is here ſaid as to the Trinity, divine Ordinances, *&c.* being occaſion'd by your mentioning Dr. *Clarke*, I hope you'll pardon the Digreſſion, if before I take my leave of ſo great Character, I give you a further Taſte of his Divinity.

And that in Relation to the Divinity or *Deity* of the Son of God, the ſecond Perſon of the bleſſed Trinity, as the Dr. delivers himſelf in his *Boyle*'s Lectures Page 185, where, ſpeaking of God the Father, his Words are, *That he did beget or produce a divine Perſon, God of God, in whom dwells the Fullneſs of divine Perfections, excepting abſolute*

Supre-

Supremacy, Independency or ſelf Origination. Now we believe the Son to be very and eternal God; but how can that Perſon at all be ſo, who is inferior to another, as to his Power, and as to his Being dependent alſo: So that our Saviour muſt be ſuch a God, or ſuch a Creature, as the World never heard of before. The Dr. here ſeems entirely to have abandon'd Revelation, this being altogether the Product of moſt exquiſite Reaſon. Such a Bleſſing to a Chriſtian Nation is a mathematical Divine. Neither muſt I omit remarking what he ſays of Nature and Miracles; his Definition of Nature in p. 222, is very good; that *it is the Will of God producing certain Effects in a continued, regular, conſtant and uniform Manner:* By which 'tis evident that the Courſe of Nature is ſubject to none but the Author of it, and therefore no change can in any wiſe be wrought, nor Variation made from its ſettled Courſe, nor its Operations alter'd or over-ruled, eſpecially in any miraculous Way, but by the immediate Interpoſition of God, or ſome other Being empower'd or delegated by him.

Quite

Quite contrary to this, in Page 225, is the Power he allows evil Spirits, of being able to work any Miracles, *Creation and raiſing from the Dead excepted.* But this Allowance is altogether unreaſonaſonable and unwarrantable; for in any other Miracle the Courſe and Power of Nature is actually ſuperſeded, and overturn'd. So that if Evil Spirits can work Miracles, they can ſubvert or over-rule the Courſe of Nature, which in Effect is the ſame as to affirm that *they alſo can* over-rule the Will of God. But it is to be believed that Evil Spirits cannot do any real Miracle; for theſe being created, and of a finite Nature, are ſubject to the Laws and Rules of it, as all other created Beings are; and nothing finite or limited, can reverſe, alter or ſuperſede the Courſe of Nature, which is governed and directed by an infinite Hand: Beſides, I dare ſay, could the Devil work Miracles, we ſhould have ſo many of them, that it would puzzle all you mighty Men of Reaſon, to form Rules whereby yourſelves, and the reſt of Mankind, might be enabled with Certainty to diſtinguiſh

ſtinguiſh what was natural, from what was miraculous.

I now come to obſerve your 41ſt Page; where, as in other Places, you make Revelation equally inſufficient with human Reaſon, on Account of the ſuperſtitious Enormities and Wickedneſs of Chriſtians. So that if Reaſon were inſufficient in this behalf formerly, Chriſtianity is no leſs ſo at preſent; and therefore if the Sufficiency of Reaſon is not granted, you are reſolv'd Revelation ſhall undergo the ſame Fate; and if your Reaſoning can take Place ſhall be deem'd inſufficient alſo. And thus, indeed, you have not fail'd to take all the Advantages poſſible againſt Chriſtianity, from the Immorality and Diviſions of its Profeſſors; thus you prevaricate in one Page, and reproach in another; but in both your Candor and Judgment are equally viſible.

That the World was full of the moſt abominable Practices in Morality and Religion, when under the Government of human Reaſon, is owing entirely to the abſolute Inſufficiency of Reaſon, to

direct

direct, command or enjoin what was better, and therefore the Inclinations of Men, tho' never ſo vicious, and the Inſtitutions of Religion drew the ſame Way; and in ſerving their Luſts, Men were verily perſuaded they ſerv'd God alſo. But under the Goſpel it is far otherwiſe; every Thing is now ſet in its full Light, even the minuteſt Duty pointed out, without the leaſt Doubtfulneſs or Ambiguity; ſo that its Sufficiency, if Men will be govern'd by it, can in no wiſe be queſtion'd or arraign'd: And to conclude its Inſufficiency, becauſe it may be ineffectual to accompliſh the Obedience and Perfection it requires, I am ſure is a very unfair and unreaſonable Way of arguing; the Abuſe of Precept being in no wiſe an Argument of its being faulty or deficient. There are, it is to be fear'd, a great many wicked Chriſtians; but I dare affirm not one for a thouſand in the Heathen World: But on the other Hand, of thoſe that excel in Virtue and good Works, a thouſand for one; and that more eſpecially in the more illuſtrious Virtues of Charity, Humility and Forgiveneſs of Injury, which were very rarely, if at all, heard of in the

Heathen Ages, the Practice of these being deemed too low for a Man of Spirit, and from mistaken Notions were thought to betray a soft and servile Temper, unworthy the Majesty and Greatness of Human Nature. And hence it was that their Laws and Religion, all the World over, encouraged the foulest Abominations, esteeming that to be most laudable, and honouring it frequently as the most virtuous Action, which was no other than some great Wickedness committed with Success.

His Lordship, according to what you say, Page 48, is of Opinion, that these mistaken Heathens, that made the best Use of the little Light they had, *cannot fail to be mercifully dealt with by infinite Justice and Goodness*; but then, this Opinion, as to the Reasonableness of such Mercy and Pardon, must be founded upon the invincible Ignorance of their Duty, the very best that they did, being far from what was good, because they knew not how to do better; whereas had Reason been sufficient, there is no room to expect any such Mercy, but rather the severest Punishment for the Abuse and Contempt of it;

and

and God could not have been ſaid to have connived at their Ignorance, but muſt over-look the moſt flagrant Abominations, done in Contradiction to the Light of Reaſon and their own Conſciences, and that in the moſt provoking and moſt unpardonable Manner, being, for ſo many Ages, publickly committed, and religiouſly profeſſed.

In the 63d Page you ſay, that *Revelation was given more effectually to reclaim the Wickedneſs of theſe Days, and to reſtore their religious Worſhip to the original, uncorrupted, rational Service of the Deity*; which, to me, ſuppoſes that there had once been ſuch a rational uncorrupted Worſhip as you mention; for Reſtoration implies a Recovery of ſomething loſt, or a Reſtitution to its former State. But I challenge you to tell me any one Nation under Heaven, whoſe Worſhip was thus rational and uncorrupted, 'till Revelation taught us this reaſonable Service, and inſtructed us in the Purity and Spirituality of it. *Give the Lord therefore the Glory due unto his Name*, who has ſent that Light into the World, which if we follow, *We*

ſhall not walk in Darkneſs, but ſhall have the Light of Life.

Whence this great Concern or Jealouſy for human Reaſon ſhould ariſe, is not conceivable to me; I muſt own you have a great Value for it, and indeed ſo ought every Man; but I fear your Zeal for it tranſports you beyond its Bounds, or otherwiſe, you would not ſay in your 65th Page, that *it is the brighteſt and moſt glorious Ray of the divine Nature*: For has not Revelation quite outdone it? Has it not removed its Imperfections, ſupply'd its Wants, and manifeſted its Inſufficiency? You acknowledge this to be true, in a great meaſure, in divers Parts of your Book, as the 7th and 47th Pages. And I do aſſure you, the Light of Revelation, as far exceeds Reaſon, or the Light of Nature, as the Light of the Sun does that of a Candle, or the Twinkling of a Star: Yet by the Tenour of your Writing, Reaſon muſt be equally capable to direct us to the Knowledge and Practice of thoſe Duties, by which we are entitled to the Favour of God, or elſe the Juſtice of God ſhall be impeach'd and revil'd, as Page 43, &c. But

will

will you thus audaciouſly turn upon your Maker, and demand of him, why he made you ſo? Ought not all Men, in all Ages, rather to be thankful for their Being, let its Condition be never ſo mean, nor to be *diſatisfy'd*, becauſe we have not more Light to guide us; nor to ſeek for it contrary to his reveal'd Will; nor when it is ſo plentifully imparted, to upbraid our Donor's Bounty, and moſt ungratefully ſay, he has given us more than we wanted. Your Pleading for the Sufficiency of Reaſon, is but one Remove from this Sin, which I fear you will draw upon you, becauſe it is the Unhappineſs of you prodigious Men of Reaſon, to be prodigiouſly Proud alſo, which is always accompanied with Ingratitude and Impiety.

Neither can it be thought altogether foreign to the purpoſe, if I remark the vicious Taſte of the preſent Age, in copying after the *Arian* Biſhops, *Acacius*, *Aëtius*, *Euzoïus*, *&c.* of which Hiſtorians give this Character, that they were ἐλλόγιμοι & διαλεκτικώτατοι, cunning Reaſoners and eloquent Speakers, ſtiff to their Opinions, and would not ſtir an Inch from their

their own Reaſon, tho' directly contrary to the Word of God: Upon which they began to lay aſide the Scripture in their publick preaching, their Sermons, as *Sozom.* ſays [r], which they call'd Lectures of Morality. And have not our Preſs and Pulpit taken the ſame Turn? Is any Thing to be met with but Reaſon and Morality, as eclipſing the Excellency of what is divine, by making Way for the Preference of human Reaſon? Inſomuch that that Preaching is now indeed counted *Fooliſhneſs*, by which alone *God has ordained Mankind ſhall be ſaved.*

But finally, to contribute to the Eaſe of your Mind, and that you may not be under any further Apprehenſions on Account of human Reaſon, remember, what you ſay in your laſt Page, that Revelation has deliver'd it from its Corruptions, and reſtored it to its original Purity. This, I think, is doing it Honour and Service too; for had not Revelation diſpelled this Darkneſs, it is to be believed, from the Experience of ſo great a Number of Years, that we were ut-

[r] Τὰς καλυμβύρας θείκὰς λόγκς. Sozom. Lib. iv.

terly

terly unable and inſufficient to have deliver'd our ſelves, we muſt ſtill have been *without God in the World*, our whole Souls clouded with the groſſeſt Obſcurity, and over-run with Corruption, Impurity and Profaneneſs. Turn then your Reaſon to the Light of Revelation, and you will find its Faculties enlarged, your Doubts and Anxieties all removed, and be convinced at once, how injurious you may be to your ſelf, and the reſt of Mankind, when your Zeal miſguides your Judgment, and makes you run ſuch Lengths on Reaſon's Side, that you expoſe and diſhonour a much better Cauſe than what you undertake to defend. Beſides, has not Reaſon its perfect and more adequate Work, whilſt there is a Light in the Heavens, an Animal in the terraqueous Globe, a Tree, a Shrub, a Plant growing out of the Earth, or a Mineral in its Bowels? Religion is none of its Concern, unleſs it be to vindicate and aſſert its Honour and Authority; God himſelf having reveal'd every Thing that tends to our Happineſs or Perfection, in this Life, and moſt aſſuredly told us alſo, what we

muſt

must do to be saved in another. For Reason to meddle further, (especially in the manner you use it) may beget Prejudice, but never Satisfaction; it may distract the World, and involve mankind in endless Doubts and Perplexities, but never will add to any Man's Peace, to the settling of his Mind, or tend to his Conviction: Not that Christianity declines or is afraid of the strictest Enquiry that Reason can make; for enquire fairly and leave your Prejudices behind you, and you will find the most irrefragable Arguments to confirm the Truth of it, and the most powerful Motives to incline you to believe it.

FINIS.